Netcom
Réseaux, communication et territoires

33-1/2 | 2019
Sharing and exchanging: private, public spaces on digital social networks

Bildung through social media
Bildung à travers les médias sociaux

MICHAEL PAULSEN ET JESPER TÆKKE
p. 125-142

Résumés

English Français
In this article we argue that 'the media situation' of the digital age brings new possibilities of Bildung (i.e. emancipation and edification). Through comparing the situation 'before' and 'after' the internet, we detect a change in the communicative infrastructure of teaching. Before the internet we see teaching taking place in closed classrooms almost without interactive contact with the surrounding world. In this setting Bildung is mainly made possible through 'internal interaction' and representation of knowledge about the world. After computers, wireless networks and smartphones has entered the scene we see teaching taking place in communicatively open classrooms with possibilities of interactive contact with "outsiders." In this setting Bildung is not only made possible through knowledge about the world, but also through internet-mediated interaction with others. Through an uncovering of these new possibilities we conclude that social media like Twitter can be used to support ‘interational Bildung.’ Empirically, we base our argument on an action research project called 'Socio Media Education.' We carried out this project in a Danish upper secondary school class. An important element was that the class and its teachers had to use Twitter for written interaction in all subjects. Theoretically we base our argument on educational theory (Kant, Klafki, Biesta), medium theory (Eisenstein and others) and sociology (Luhmann and Goffman).

Dans cet article, nous soutenons que la ‘situation des médias’ de l’ère numérique offre de nouvelles possibilités de Bildung (c'est-à-dire l'émanicipation et l'éducation). Comparant la situation ‘avant’ et ‘après’ l'avènement d'Internet, nous décelons un changement dans l'infrastructure de communication au sein de l'enseignement. Avant l'avènement d'Internet, nous constatons que l'enseignement se déroule dans des salles de classe fermées sans contact interactionnel, ou presque, avec le monde environnant. Dans ce contexte, la Bildung s'appuie principalement sur une 'interaction interne' et la représentation de connaissances sur le monde. Depuis l'apparition des ordinateurs, des réseaux sans fil et des smartphones, nous constatons que l'enseignement se déroule dans des salles de classe ouvertes en termes de communication et susceptibles de contact interactionnel avec des ‘personnes de l’extérieur’. Dans ce contexte, la Bildung ne s'appuie pas uniquement sur des connaissances du monde, mais aussi sur une interaction avec autrui par l'intermédiaire d'Internet. En révélant quelles sont ces nouvelles possibilités, nous concluons que les médias sociaux, comme Twitter, peuvent être utilisés pour accompagner 'la Bildung interactionnelle'. Nous concluons en outre que 'la Bildung interactionnelle' est nécessaire pour évaluer ces nouvelles opportunités. Au niveau empirique, nous fondons notre argumentation sur un projet de recherche-action dénommé 'Socio Media
Education’ (les médias sociaux dans l’enseignement). Nous avons mené ce projet dans une classe du deuxième cycle de l’enseignement secondaire danois. Un élément important du projet a été l’utilisation, par la classe et ses enseignants, de l’application Twitter comme interaction écrite dans toutes les matières. Au niveau théorique, nous fondons notre argumentation sur les théories de l’éducation (Kant, Klafki, Biesta), les théories des médias (Eisenstein et autres) et la sociologie (Luhmann et Goffman).

Entrées d’index

Mots-clés : Bildung, média social, enseignement, communication, Internet, interaction, représentation, salle de classe, altérité, société numérique

Keywords : Bildung, social media, teaching, communication, Internet, interaction, representation, classroom, otherness, digital society

Texte intégral

Introduction

1 The last decade we have tried to shed light on the difference between teaching before and after the internet. This was made with the aim of understanding what it implies for teaching to now be situated in a digital age. In this article we want to focus on whether the new ‘media situation’ of the digital age brings new possibilities of Bildung (i.e. emancipation and edification). Formulated in positive terms we will put forward the argument that social media like Twitter can be used to create new forms of interaction and representation and therefore new possibilities of Bildung. Empirically, we base our argument on an action research project called Socio Media Education. We carried out this project in a Danish upper secondary school class we followed from start to end (3 years) from 2011-214 (Tække and Paulsen 2017). An important element of the experiment was that the class and its teachers had to use Twitter for written interaction in all subjects. Theoretically we base our argument on educational theory (Kant 1784, Klafki 2005, Biesta 2006 and Kemp 2011), medium theory (Eisenstein 1983, Brugger 2002, Finneman 2005 and Jenkins 2008) and sociology (Goffman 1990, Foucault 1991 and Luhmann 2006).

2 A few introducing remarks are necessary. We focus on how new social media like Twitter has an educational potential when it comes to classroom teaching in schools. Yet, we only discuss this through a Bildung-perspective1. Further we develop the concept of classroom teaching as a social-communicative activity that combines interaction and representation. Furthermore, we develop a historical framework for understanding interaction and representation in different media societies. Before the internet we argue teaching took place in closed classrooms almost without interactional contact with the surrounding world. In this setting Bildung was mainly made possible through ‘internal interaction’ and representation of knowledge about the world through spoken language, writing, printed texts (especially books but also other forms of texts like newspapers) and analogue electronic media. We compare this situation with teaching after the internet. We focus on a situation, where students and teachers have the possibility of using digital media (internet, computers, smartphones, etc.) to communicate with each other and with outsiders. In this communicatively open classroom, it becomes possible to create new forms of interaction and representation and thus new forms of teaching. In this article, we concentrate on how teachers and students can make use of Twitter to create educational relevant written interaction inside the class and also with third parties being outside of the classroom. Thus, we want to explore if this new possibility for interactional contact also carries new Bildung potential.

3 We have structured the article in three main sections. In the first we outline our theoretical Bildung-perspective on teaching and media. In the second we analyse the situation of teaching and media before the internet. Thus we show how Bildung is
framed under non-digital media conditions. Finally, in the third and longest section we analyse the situation after the internet, in a class using both analogue and digital media. Our aim is not to uncover every new aspect of teaching in ‘digital age.’ Rather our ambition is to pinpoint only one Bildung-relevant possibility that seems to be new. We end the third section by summarising the “newness” of this Bildung-possibility.

**Bildung perspective on teaching and media**

**Short historical framing of the Bildung concept**

The concept of Bildung is German and means *imaging*. Like it is said that God created mankind in his own image, the concept addresses the question of what image we are to be formed in. Thinkers like Kant, Herder, Humboldt, Hegel and Schleiermacher shaped the concept during the time of the enlightenment (Klafki 2005). According to Kant “Enlightenment is man’s emergence from his self-imposed immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to use one’s understanding without guidance from another” (Kant 1784). Kant also fostered the idea that the ability to think freely and for oneself is the product of education (ibid.; Taekke & Paulsen 2016b). Further Kant says that: “children ought to be educated, not for the present, but for a possibly improved condition of man in the future; that is, in a manner which is adapted to the idea of humanity and the whole destiny of man.” (Kant #15). And Kant’s idea was that this better future is only possible because of better education: “But they ought to give them an education so much better than this, that a better condition of things may thereby be brought about in the future” (ibid.).

**Reconstructing the core of the Bildung-perspective**

The important thing in this context is that in a Bildung-perspective, teaching is not seen as a *transmission* of content from teachers to students (curriculum-centred education) with effective means (media). Also teaching is not seen as facilitating learning and development (student-centred learning) through stimulating learning spaces. Rather teaching is comprehended as interfering in the ways the students are in the world - with the aim of enabling them to “think freely” and “create a good life for everyone” - through appropriate, relevant and formative social interaction (using social media: language, communication, writing, etc.). Thus, in a Bildung perspective teaching is basically about encouraging the students to think for themselves and question their ways of being in the world from the perspective of humanity in the broadest sense (Biesta 2006). But also supporting the students to become qualified to handle freedom/humanity “with care.” Bildung must therefore not be confused with socialisation or cultural shaping. By contrast, Bildung should be understood as breaking with such “determinations” (Straume 2013). However, this does not mean that all upbringing, etc. should be cancelled. It only means that the individual is encouraged to take up these “determinations” to critical examination, thinking about whether one should confirm or reject them (and on what grounds).

In the Bildung-perspective teaching is seen as an intervention in the students’ lives to encourage them to become “free” and “rational” (Klafki 2005). Such intervention is only possible through media. To intervene one needs communication media like language and books, but also buildings, architecture, organisational structures, traditions, etc. Or to formulate it paradoxically: to help the students to break free from sociality and “outer determination” one needs social structures, media and practice. Or to put it even more bluntly: One needs media that makes it possible to interact and
represent symbolic meaning. Each student always arrives with a particular “being-in-the-world” – that is with experiences, abilities, networks, interests, opinions, expectations, etc. The Bildung process therefore always starts with this factual, concrete and personal being-in-the world. On the other hand: the individual is not an island, but is always growing up in a world already populated by experiences, structures, buildings, values, languages, problems, etc. Addressing the way students are in the world is therefore both to address their unique ways of living and thinking but also to address the real world, they are living in (Biesta 2006). The teacher role consists in asking a “double” question about the way the students are in the world and the way the world “are in” them. The aim is to open up the relation, enabling the students to engage and relate more freely – making it possible in principle that it can be “their world.” Further the aim is to support students in managing this freedom in good ways. That is helping the student on the way to create a good life with and for all others.

Dimensions of Bildung: knowledge, attitude and existence

Inspired by Biesta’s (2010) distinction between qualification, socialisation and subjectification we can specify that the school’s contribution to Bildung in the late modernity must include a ‘balance’ between at least three dimensions: knowledge, attitude and existence. According to what we said in the paragraph above, it implies that the teachers must encourage the students to question their knowledge (what they think they know about the world and what they assume is sufficient to know to create a good life for themselves, others and the planet), their attitude (how they relate to each other, others and the world, say for instance egoistic or altruistic) and their personal existence (who they think they are and wants to be or think they can be).

Addressing the need for balancing these dimensions teachers should at least ask three main questions: The first question is what knowledge students need to create a better world and to serve the common good? (Klaﬁki 2005.) The second question is what attitude towards others and the world as such is the right one in particular situations? (Kemp 2011.) The last question is about how we can choose and form individual existence in the world, that brings meaning to our life and simultaneously contributes to the shared life on this fragile planet (Biesta 2017).

Summing up the Bildung perspective

If we integrate the general aim of Bildung (i.e. to intervene in the students being-in-the-world to encourage them to relate more freely to the world and managing this freedom in good ways) with the three dimensions – knowledge, attitude and existence – we can say that the teacher must encourage the student to be free in all three matters, balancing these dimensions adequately. Concerning social media, it means that we ask whether social media can be used by teachers to interfere in and work with the relationship between the students and the world. This work must happen in different dimensions - working not only with their knowledge, but also with their attitude and their existence (or what could be called their personal ways of being in the world). Today it also implies a focus on helping students to create a good life with others in a digitalised world (Paulsen & Tække 2018, Jenkins et. al 2013, Erstad et. al. 2015).

Teaching, media and Bildung before the Internet

Communication and Interaction
According to Luhmann (1995) society consists in communication. Communication is defined as a synthesis of three selections, namely information, utterance and understanding (Luhmann 1990, p. 3). Luhmann (1995) distinguish between three different kinds of communicative systems: society, organisation and interaction. Society is defined as a system differentiated from the surrounding world which does not communicate. The modern society is observed as functional differentiated in systems like law, economy and politics, but also education is observed as a functional system. Organisations are defined as decision systems and a concrete school is an example. In a school it is decided how many teachers, students, rooms, etc. it should have, and, for instance, which teaching materials, and which kind of pedagogic. Interaction is defined in line with Goffman as a kind of communication that demand face to face situations where alter and ego mutually observe each other; present to one another (Luhmann 1995, p. 392). In the words of Goffman: the reciprocal influence of individuals upon one another's actions when in one another's immediate physical presence.” (Goffman, 1990, p. 26). The distinction between communication as an inclusive concept and interaction as a narrower concept is that the latter opens for a synchronisation in the present time and space which implies coordination in actions in regard to the surrounding world on a higher level and co-regulation on a lower level.

Teaching – interaction in the classroom

According to Luhmann (2006) teaching in the classroom is too complex to be handled as organisation and therefore runs as interaction in an asymmetrical relation between a teacher and her students. The school is one of the societal institutions built on what Foucault (1991) calls power of discipline. We have a closed room with a teacher sitting in front of a class of students, monitoring them, asking them questions, noting marks in a protocol, etc. During the teaching time there are typically no interruptions from the outside: “In order to minimise distraction from the outside world, the interaction takes place in closed spaces that are not publicly accessible” (Luhmann 2006, p. 131). The teacher has authoritative power over the interpretations of the printed textbook and a certain power over the educational interaction: “In particular, the spatial seclusion of the teaching ensures that the education system can control its own themes and decide the beginning of, shift between or abandonment of themes” (Luhmann 2006, p. 132).

Use of representation media in education

Comprehended from the perspective of medium theory (Eisenstein 1983, Brugger 2002, Finneman 2005) we can observe that teaching as interaction represents meaning about itself and the surrounding world through different media of representation, that is spoken language, writing, printed texts, etc. Through these media, the surrounding world which the students had to learn about is represented symbolically in the educational interaction. Later on, also paper copies, audio and audiovisual media were used for the representation of the surrounding world. Through the combination of a closed face-to-face interaction (within four walls) and use of analogue media to represent the outside world teaching was formed as a closed system in the era before digital media. Our basic understanding of what teaching is, is based on this historically developed media set-up, outlining the possibilities and limitations of education.

The Bildung situation before the Internet

The Bildung situation in the schools before the internet was structured by a clear-cut distinction between classroom teaching and outside. We would not deny that there were exceptions, but the normal situation, at least in the European post-second-world-war context we focus on here, was based on a clear-cut distinction. When students were in
school they could not interact with persons (e.g. parents, friends, strangers, politicians, etc.) being other places. Neither could they attend different non-educative communities, look at commercials, invest money, play games with others, etc.

14 This “clear-cut” structure implied a “two-chamber educational system.” On the one hand, students were socialised and raised in different social settings (homes, families, network, etc.). On the other hand, they attend a school being mainly the same for everyone (at least for everyone being in the same classroom). The result was chance inequalities, exclusion mechanisms, etc. Furthermore, the world/otherness was represented in the classroom through media like the book, the blackboard and the “all-knowing” teacher. The upshot was more or less an “echo chamber” or monoculture, supporting the idea of teaching as “assimilation and “transmission,” representing knowledge about the world more than the idea of Bildung understood as an intervention in the students being-in-the-world. The scope of Bildung was therefore limited to a dominating representational mode of education (formulated in broad terms and, of course, acknowledging that in the real history of education, there has been countless many progressive deviations).

Teaching, media and Bildung After the Internet

Digital media and new information- and interaction situations

15 With the appearance of laptops, tablets, smartphones and wireless networks the classroom is opened up in regard to information and interaction (Fu 2013). The protection of the four walls is broken down and the teacher does not any longer have knowledge monopoly (Crook 2008). Observations show that the students are distracted and are paying attention to other parallel activities than the teaching in the classes (Mathiasen et al. 2014). They are interacting with each other or outsiders about other topics than the teaching and does not use the new possibilities for searching information and if they do, they do not conduct a proper source criticism (Kiili 2012). Looking outside school in the surrounding society following Jenkins (2008; 2006), we see a participation culture characterised by shaping, sharing, reframing, remixing and appropriation, and with Bruns (2008) produsage and intercreativity. Looking inside school, we see teachers trying to teach like the situation were like in the old medium society without digital media (Tække & Paulsen 2013).

Interaction in the classroom and beyond

16 Goffman and Luhmann’s idea about physical presence as the defining feature of interaction separating it from other forms of communication is problematic (Tække 2006; Tække & Paulsen 2018). The concept of interaction must have a definition that take into account the communicative space of electronic and digital media. The important dimension for presence is not necessarily geographical spatial because digital media provide us with a parallel communication space. Therefore the temporal dimension is critical, which we find in the definition of cyberspace interaction: “Cyberspace interaction is a situation where alter and ego at the same moment of time through cyberspace have their attention directed to the uttering of each other” (Tække 2002, p. 41). Thus, with Skype, Twitter and many other new digital social media it becomes possible to create interaction between people who are not present at the same geographical place. Different kinds of quasi-interaction systems also arise. This happens when for instance people chat together, e-mail together, etc. In these situations, the communicators are not necessarily directed towards the communicative
units at the exact same time, but nevertheless co-regulate through directing their attention to each other’s utterances respectively, forming time-limited interaction systems, e.g. two days chat about the planning of a party. With all this in mind it becomes clear that we now, also in the classroom, have a “parallel interaction space,” enabling the students (and their teachers) to participate with each other and “outsiders” in countless soap bubbles like interactions in and out of the classroom parallel with the face-to-face interaction in the class (Atkinson 2010).

**Twitter and educational interaction**

17 Twitter provides space for written (often quasi) interaction (and also a lot of noise that can be seen as the ongoing production of a reservoir of conditions for the arise of interactional closure). One Twitter-message is limited to 280 characters (or 140 before 2018) and it is possible to read all messages from all other users. This complexity can be reduced by following other users, by building lists and not at least, through the use of hashtags (#) that opens for focusing the interaction on specific topics. Here to tags (@) means that messages can be directed towards specific persons, for instance, in the class discussion focused on a specific hashtag (Junco 2010, Lowe & Laffey 2011, Elavsky et al. 2011, Hosterman 2012, Menkhoff et al. 2015).

**The SME-experiment**

18 The empirical findings that we will build on in the next two sections come from the action research project *The Socio Media Education Experiment* – a project we carried out in an upper secondary school class during its three years of being from 2011-2014 (Tække & Paulsen 2013; 2015; 2016; 2017). The teachers in the experiment were called to abandon both prohibition and ignorance as general strategies in relation to media use. Further they were called to make use of digital media for educational purposes and in connection with this provoke ‘media reflexivity’ in the classroom, for instance, helping the students to take informed decisions in relation to multitasking or single-tasking. On this basis, the teachers experimented through multiple actions like using Twitter during film watching and student presentations. From the second school year and onwards the teachers also had to make contact out of the classroom and include internet-based otherness in the teaching. We have documentation in various forms like thousands of tweets, observations, pictures and interviews (*ibid.*).

**Written interaction within the classroom**

19 As documented in Tække and Paulsen (2013), the teachers in the SME-class used Twitter for written interaction. A good example is that the students simultaneously had to tweet about films they saw. In comparison with other observations of classes watching film the simultaneous written interaction had several advantages. To mention two of the greatest, the class actually saw the film and did not attend other activities on their screens. The other top finding is that the students produced collective notes and interpretations (*ibid.*).

**Student 1**: “When we saw a film, then the teacher questioned us on Twitter and we had to answer. I think it was really good.”

**Researcher**: “And why was it good?”

**Student 1**: “Because then you got it if it was something essential... something that you did not get.”

**Student 2**: “instead of remembering it all after the film. It can be relatively difficult to remember a whole film afterwards.”

**Researcher**: “Wasn’t it difficult?”
Student 1: “No, not really, you only lose a few seconds because it is running at the same time. What you lose is just how the picture was.”

Student interview 2 d. 2/11 – 2011.

As evident in the interview, the parallel written interaction works as a support in relation to generating educational attention and understanding in the process, and as production of notes and memory that the students can draw on later. The fact that the student has to relate actively to the teacher's and other students’ questions triggers reflections and focus. At the same time, the student can ask questions if their understanding blocks for keeping up with the plot. On the other hand, the students do not look down on their screen to follow other things on the web. This is also helped on its way because the teacher is sitting together with the students, motivating them to take part in the collective analytical work. However, not everybody can manage to write while watching, but in a writing interaction medium one still gets the benefit of what others write both during and after the film (Takke and Paulsen 2013). We have documented similar outcomes in relation to oral presentations and, for example, brainstorming about a novel before the analytical work.

The educational community using written interaction in this way is able to interpellate students and thereby initialise involvement, and maintain attention, activity, participation and work discipline. Also, according to both observations and interviews, more students are included in the educational interaction than if it only took place orally. Furthermore, the quality improves when written interaction is also used, and the students feel that the educational interaction better calls for attention when it also is on their screen. The use of written interaction demands practice; it is not easy to multiplex, express yourself in few characters and be precise in an academic sense, using hashtags, links and tags. Also, in regard to Bildung we see that students through participation and reflections on participation works critically with their attitude and self-relationship. When talking knowledge, the new form of representation and the active participation in written interaction improves the student’s acquisition of knowledge. According to teacher interviews, they experience that they cannot perform educational written interaction in other classes with the same quality and participation as they do in the SME class. This means that the SME-class had developed digital literacy enabling the educational written interaction. After acquiring the sufficient competences in written interaction, the teachers began to provide homework support one hour five evenings a week.

Researcher: “Do you think it's an advantage that you can get help when you are at home?”

Student: “Yes, I do, because you know it is not always that your parents can help with all subjects. So yes, it is great that you can write to your teacher and not have to wait until the next day.”

Student interview 17 14/3 2013.

According to a teacher interview, the teacher felt that she (because the community was also mediated through written interaction) had the opportunity to catch up on students that she felt she had not had contact with during the school day. A last experiment with Twitter to be mentioned here was the use of the medium on a trip to Copenhagen where the students and teachers organised many of their visits around the town with Twitter.

Written interaction between class and surrounding world

From the second year, the teachers in the SME-class had to work on cultivating the contact between the class and its surrounding world to establish dialogue with network resources and real otherness. The class should in this way achieve that the otherwise disturbing contact with the surrounding world would become an educational asset. Moreover, this contact would have enriched and inspired the information situation with angles and perspectives going beyond what the teacher could offer. This move
cultivated the class to work in modes more adequate to the contemporary media environment.

One example was when the literature teacher made contact with the Danish poet Kasper Anthøni. The class read one of his collections of poems and through two sessions interacted with him on Twitter. According to the teacher, the students usually have little or no interest in poetry, but this contact really got them interested. Also, according to the students the experience was very motivating and mind-blowing.

**Student 1**: “I think it was a totally different way to analyse poems. A much better way I think.”

**Student 2**: “Yes, when we have the author [on Twitter] we can question him if there is something we cannot understand in the poem and ask him what he meant and then he can come with a tweet about it.”

*Group interview 1 31/10 2012.*

**Student 1**: “It helps with the interpretation. If I ask him how he got the idea, then he says that he had a feeling, and then it is easier to interpret the poem. I think it was good.”

*Group interview 5 31/10 2012.*

Through the written interaction with the poet the class moves out of the closed room. Instead of only teaching about the world, it becomes possible to generate teaching in interaction with the world. The teacher falls a little back but still takes the responsibility, letting the students get to the source and letting it be the centre of their attention and reflection. The teacher has made the connection to, and appointment with the poet, helped the students to read the book, with good questions, and with their division in groups for the sessions. These efforts are good investments because the students’ motivation and involvement are triggered by the direct contact with real otherness through Twitter.

Another example is two episodes where other school classes were contacted (one in Denmark and one in Germany, both with positive results). Again, we see that the students were very involved and motivated by interacting with others outside the class, here with other students of the same age. According to the teachers, more students were drawn into the schoolwork than usually. It felt more important to the students to contribute, and also the quality was higher than normal. They also acquired new angles on their subjects, and also new knowledge and information than represented by their own teacher. In relation to the German class, it also became important to write correctly and the students felt that the language written by the German students was a more real German than in the books and spoken by the teacher. Moreover, the students felt that they themselves had something to contribute to the other classes (Taekke & Pauelsen 2016).

The last example, we provide here, was an action where some of the students and teachers from the class, according to an appointment, sat at home one evening watching a TV documentary about the financial crisis, using Twitter to interact about it. After some time, one of the students observed that the rest of the Danes watching the documentary while on Twitter used a global hashtag to interact about it.

**Researcher**: “So you were discussing the documentary with the others from the class and then it was extended. What do you think of that?”

**Student**: “You also got other people’s opinion [...] and there were really many opinions and tweets and it was going on log after the programme ended. It was really exciting.”

**Researcher**: “Was it good for the discussion that it was not just the class and your teachers?”

**Student**: “Yes, I believe so. Because we maybe have a little bit the same opinion in the class, because we have the same teacher, and it is the same things we do. And then there were other people’s opinions, people that are another place in their life, and have another perspective on society.”

*Student interview 9 9/1-2013.*
Here, an educationally relevant hole is knocked in the classes re-stabilised educational interaction, and perspectives arrive from the outside. The typical situation in the closed room “of yesterday,” where the teacher decides what is good and what is evil, right and wrong, fades away. As we saw with the poet, the cultivated opening undermines this position and the teacher must find a new position. Not necessarily weakened, but more adequate with the new media environment as an educator that confronts the students with the different opinions in society and helps the students with understanding, analysing and responding to these. We asked the student what it would be like if the SME class had not had the contact to the external world:

**Student**: “Yes then I believe, then it would be biased, the teacher’s opinion would shine through very much. Now we get others’ opinions, others’ view on the things. This means that what the teacher says is not just right, but that you then also can find information about: can this really be true? Why does she say that? And such things. So, it makes us think in another way.”

*Student interview 9 9/1-2013.*

**Bildung situation after the Internet**

The Bildung situation in the schools after the appearance of the internet is structured by the new “openness” that the digital media brings (Knutka 2015). This openness is not unconditionally a good thing. The student’s attention is drawn away from teaching by new powers such as Facebook, online commercials and videos, but also by personal messages and attraction of exciting online communities (Tække & Paulsen 2013). Al this is not only happening in the classroom but also everywhere else when the students for instance try to do homework *(ibid.)*. For some students it implies stress, discomfort and serious problems with learning and concentration (Mathiasen 2014). Also, it gives teachers and schools the “bad” opportunity to “hammer” students with tasks, information and control, when the students are home or elsewhere, 24 hours a day. Furthermore, it brings new possibilities of surveillance and control systems (Livingstone 2014). Seen from a Bildung-perspective this is not good. Rather it appears as a new set of global problems and challenges students should be helped to become “free from” and aimed with power to handle/change to the better. Thus, teachers seen from a Bildung-perspective must take the responsibility of helping students with understanding, evaluating, coping and changing the new digital framed media society we now live in. This is one important dimension of what could be called ‘Digital Bildung.

Yet, the new openness also brings new “positive” possibilities of Bildung. Because the classroom is opened up, there is no longer a clear-cut distinction between inside and outside of teaching. This brings the possibility of breaking with the echo room – creating more polyphonic classrooms – confronting the students with more heterogenous otherness. On a daily basis more and different voices can be brought into teaching on an interactional basis. Instead of focusing on media of representation (and thus teaching about the world) it becomes possible to put more emphasis on media of interaction enabling real encounters with others and otherness (and thus supporting Bildung). This also gives the opportunity to indirectly interfere in the students’ networks outside school – thereby reducing chance inequalities. What we can see in the SME-experiment is that such meetings with others and otherness has the potential of making knowledge more personal and contextual relevant for the students. It helps the teachers to encourage the students to work with their “meeting” attitudes and prejudices about strangers and different world perspectives. But most significantly it brings the possible of giving more room for existential development. By this we mean that students meeting with real unique others achieve the possibility of mising, invent and test their own voices and identity constructions in dialogue with many other different people from the whole world, doing the same. This also gives a new possibility for teachers to intervene in the student’s way of being in a digitalised, global and pluralised society.
This being said, there are, of course, both pros and cons of a polyphonic classroom. The main advantage of a polyphonic classroom is that more voices are brought into play. Yet, by the same token this runs the risk of giving rise to much too bewildering, distraction, confusion and chaos in the classroom. If several voices speak at the same time, the result might be nothing else than noise. If students have substantial difficulties with the subject matter and with their concentration, more voices are not always to the benefit. What we are arguing is therefore only that teachers can use digital media to make their teaching more polyphonic and that this can bring out new possibilities of Bildung, if and only if, it is applied in an appropriate way (with regards to the specific students and their capabilities).

To summarise our argument, we will say that if students are to have enough chances to be able to create a good life for everyone in a digitalised world, they should be helped by teachers (and others) with three things, we can call aspects of digital Bildung: (1) Get help to understand and coping with new difficulties related to the digital society. (2) Be encouraged to using digital media in good ways for good purposes. (3) Be confronted with relevant otherness and meeting with others through the internet. The first task mostly addresses the knowledge dimension – encouraging students to develop knowledge adequately and “know how” about coping with the challenges of the digital reality. Yet, this also involves existential coordinates (e.g. personal stance) and working with attitude (e.g. developing a media-critical outlook). The second task mostly addresses the attitude dimension – by engaging the students in a critical teaching praxis where new media are tested and evaluated. Yet, this will also mean that the students get the chance to know more about media from critical experience, and also form their own unique ways of seeing and using media. Finally, the third task mostly addresses the existential dimension, as we have stated above. All in all, this threefold concept of Digital Bildung summarised as far as we can see, some of the important new educational tasks teachers and schools must take responsibility for in a digital society; at least seen from a Bildung perspective. Also, it emphasises that the new Bildung potential digital media brings, are not to understand as something that can be attained non-critically and without working with the students basic understanding of themselves, others and the world in the digital society we now live in.

**Conclusion**

We have argued that social media like Twitter can be used in education to create new possibilities of Bildung (understood as encouraging students to relate freely to the world and managing this freedom in good ways). We have also argued that the basic situation before the internet supported teaching understood as representing knowledge about the world limiting the scope of Bildung (especially limiting the existential dimension). Furthermore, we have argued that the situation after the internet brings new possibilities of creating democratic and polyphonic teaching, giving rise to teaching understood as interaction with others/otherness, giving more opportunities to actualise Bildung, outstandingly in the existential dimension of Bildung, but also concerning the student’s personal knowledge and attitude. Finally, we have emphasised the need for Digital Bildung helping students with understanding and coping with both dangers and new possibilities of a digital society.

**Bibliographie**


DOI : 10.4324/978135677497


DOI: 10.1017/CBO9780511819230


DOI: 10.1080/17439884.2010.549828


DOI: 10.1007/s10639-015-9431-3


DOI: 10.7551/mitpress/9780262036016.003.0012


DOI: 10.1111/j.1365-2799.2010.00387.x


TÆKKE J., OG PAULESEN M. (2017), Digitalisation of education – the theory of the three waves, Monograph Series from The Centre for Internet Research Aarhus, Denmark 2017 (vol. 17).


TÆKKE J. (2002), "Cyberspace as a Space parallel to geographical space", in Virtual space : The spatiality of virtual inhabited 3D worlds, Lars Qvortrup (Ed), Springer Publishers, pp. 25 - 42.


Notes

1 For studies of the relationship between social media and education, that do not focus on Bildung but on education in general and different school subjects and institutional settings, see for instance Holotescu & Grassek 2008, Yaros 2012, TESS 2013, Wang et al. 2014, Leaver & Kent 2014 and Kinsky & Bruce 2015. The upshot of these studies is that social media can be used to support education, learning and teaching. Our article can be seen in compliance with this, but with a focus on Bildung. In PAULESEN & TÆKKE 2018 we give a full account of this.

2 In the December 1784 publication of the Berlinische Monatschrift (Berlin Monthly), edited by Friedrich Gedike and Johann Erich Bieter, Kant replied to the question posed a year earlier, see: http://www.artotheory.com/what-is-enlightenment_immanuel-kant/

3 “Mutual social coordination requires that there be a continuous unfolding of individual action that is susceptible to being continuously modified by the continuously changing actions of the partner. I call this continuous mutual adoption process co-regulation” (Fogel 1993, p. 29).

4 Multiplexing is the situation in which the attention is pointed towards one intentional object but in more than one medium at the same time, such as listing and writing notes. It is not the same as multitasking, where you try to point your attention towards different things at the same time.

5 From a Bildung perspective it is important that the instrumental competence is always learnt in an educational context with a humanistic, emancipatory and democratic aim (Klafki 2005).

Pour citer cet article

Référence papier

https://journals.openedition.org/netcom/3944

13/14
Michael Paulsen et Jesper Tække, « Bildung through social media », Netcom, 33-1/2 | -1, 125-142.

Référence électronique
Michael Paulsen et Jesper Tække, « Bildung through social media », Netcom [En ligne], 33-1/2 | 2019, mis en ligne le 05 septembre 2019, consulté le 29 novembre 2019. URL : http://journals.openedition.org/netcom/3944 ; DOI : 10.4000/netcom.3944

Auteurs

Michael Paulsen
Department for the Study of Culture, University of Southern Denmark, mpauslen@sdu.dk.

Jesper Tække
School of Communication and Culture – Media Studies, Aarhus University, imvjet@cc.au.dk.

Droits d’auteur

Netcom – Réseaux, communication et territoires est mis à disposition selon les termes de la licence Creative Commons Attribution - Pas d’Utilisation Commerciale - Pas de Modification 4.0 International.

Ce site utilise des cookies et collecte des informations personnelles vous concernant. Pour plus de précisions, nous vous invitons à consulter notre politique de confidentialité (mise à jour le 25 juin 2018). En poursuivant votre navigation, vous acceptez l'utilisation des cookies.